

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Little Snake Field Office  
455 Emerson Street  
Craig, CO 81625

## DOCUMENTATION OF LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE AND NEPA ADEQUACY

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-N010-2010-0089-DNA

BIOLOGICAL CONTROL AGENT RELEASE PROPOSAL NUMBER: 10-CO-100-71

PROJECT NAME: Release of *Diorhabda elongata* defoliating beetle to control saltcedar along Vermillion Creek near Vermillion Falls.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T9N, R101W, Sec. 21 (See map, Attachment 1)

APPLICANT: Little Snake Field Office BLM

### A. Background

Saltcedar infestations on public lands in the Little Snake Resource Area are moderate with intermixed levels of native riparian vegetation. Saltcedar can lead to non-beneficial water use, increased soil salinity, low vegetative diversity, increased fire hazard, reduced recreational usage, sedimentation and erosion. This invasive species is intermixed across land ownership throughout the area and provides a challenge for managing populations.

*Diorhabda elongata* is a defoliating beetle that has had great success throughout western Colorado and eastern Utah in establishing populations. These insects are defoliating saltcedar stands and beginning to provide some control measure of this invasive species. Previous releases have been monitored and populations have moved significant distances from release sites providing extensive, cost effective control of saltcedar. A cut-stump treatment was used on saltcedar at Vermillion Falls in 2009 for recreation and aesthetic purposes.

### B. Describe the Proposed Action

The purpose of the insect release is to continue to target saltcedar upstream and downstream of the falls, as there is a continuous saltcedar infestation all along the Vermillion Creek drainage. The proposed release would occur during the late spring/early summer (late May/early June) when notice is received on availability of insects and when plant growth has reached an adequate level to maintain an adult insect population. There is the potential for another release at the same location sometime in mid-July. The APHIS/Colorado Department of Agriculture Insectary in Palisade, CO will use insects collected at other sites. Approximately 10,000 insects would be released per event. Following the release, monitoring would occur to provide local control and

success data as well as provide data back to the insectary. Biological Control Agent Release Proposal (BCARP) 10-CO-100-71 outlines the proposed release of *Diorhabda elongata* (saltcedar beetle) along Vermillion Creek near Vermillion Falls. Attachment #1 shows the location of the proposed release sites.

The proposed release site along Vermillion Creek is described below:

	<b>Vermillion Falls area</b>
<b>General Topography</b>	Floodplain (0-3% slopes)
<b>Aspect</b>	Northwest
<b>Elevation</b>	5600'
<b>Soil Type</b>	Baroid-Eghelm complex (MU 9): Deep soils (up to 60") of sand and sandy loam derived from alluvium. Well drained. Ecological site: Cold Desert Overflow.
<b>Biological Site Characteristics</b>	Potential native vegetation includes basin wildrye, reed, alkali sacaton, inland saltgrass, western wheatgrass. Site vegetation currently includes Wyoming big sagebrush, greasewood, phragmites, western wheatgrass, Canada thistle, scouring rush, Baltic rush, spike rush, licorice, tamarisk, Russian olive, cottonwood, sumac, and coyote willows in adjacent areas.

Site photos can be found in Attachment #2.

Biological control is provided for in the Little Snake Field Office weed management program. Additional analysis of the *Diorhabda* release was completed by APHIS in June of 2005.

## **B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance**

LUP Name: Little Snake Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (ROD)

Date Approved: April 26, 1989

Final RMP/EIS, September 1986

Draft RMP/EIS, February 1986

Other Documents:

Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing in Colorado

Date Approved: February 12, 1997

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as Amended (43 USC 1752)

Rangeland Reform Final Environmental Impact Statement, December 1994.

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUPs because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decisions.

**C. Identify applicable NEPA documents and other related documents that cover the proposed action.**

Program for Biological Control of Saltcedar (*Tamarix* spp.) in Thirteen States Environmental Assessment (June, 2005; APHIS)

Vegetation Treatments on BLM Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) (June, 2007)

Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States, June 5, 1991, and the Colorado Record of Decision (ROD, July 1991)

EA# CO-016-94-056 Noxious Weed Treatment in the Little Snake Resource Area (March 30, 1994) resulted in a Finding of No Significant Impact. This Environmental Assessment considered the options of Integrated Pest Management as outlined in the FEIS and adopted the standard operation procedures for vegetation treatment program implementation.

Amendment to EA# CO-016-94-056 Noxious Weed Treatment in the Little Snake Resource Area (May 4, 1994) expanded the use of herbicide application methods to include broadcast and aerial applications.

**D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria**

**1. Is the current proposed action substantially the same action (or is a part of that action) as previously analyzed? Is the current proposed action located at a site specifically analyzed in an existing document?**

Yes. This proposal is the same as that analyzed in the APHIS release EA. The site is located in Colorado north of the 38 degree latitude. The BCARP and the proposed action in this DNA include additional site-specific information.

**2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the current proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?**

Yes. The alternatives included in the APHIS EA are applicable to this release site. Control of saltcedar continues to be an ecological concern and is of importance at this site based on 2005 inventory data.

**3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances?**

Yes. The Proposed Action would have no disproportionate impacts on minority populations or low income communities per Executive Order (EO) 12898 and would not adversely impact migratory birds per EO 13186. No additional information or circumstances invalidates the existing analysis.

**4. Do the methodology and analytical approach used in the existing NEPA document(s) continue to be appropriate for the current proposed action?**

Yes. The methodology and analytical approach used in the existing NEPA documents continue to be appropriate for the current proposed action. Impacts to all resources were analyzed.

**5. Are the direct and indirect impacts of the current proposed action substantially unchanged from those identified in the existing NEPA document(s)? Does the existing NEPA document analyze site-specific impacts related to the current proposed action?**

Yes. Direct and indirect impacts of the current proposed action are unchanged from those identified in the existing NEPA documents. The BCARP will be reviewed and approved based on the existing NEPA documents to complete the site-specific analysis for this biological control release.

**6. Can you conclude without additional analysis or information that the cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the current proposed action substantially unchanged from those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)?**

Yes. The cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the proposed action would remain unchanged from those identified in the existing NEPA documents.

**7. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?**

Yes. Public outreach through scoping and involvement of the public and other agencies occurred in the development of the LSFO RMP/EIS and the APHIS release EA.

**E. Interdisciplinary Analysis:** Identify those team members conducting or participating in the preparation of this worksheet.

Name	Title	Resource	Initials	Date
Emily Spencer	Ecologist	Air Quality, Floodplains Prime/Unique Farmlands, Water Quality – Surface, Wetlands/Riparian Zones, Hazardous Materials	ELS	5/6/10
Robyn Morris	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources, Native American Concerns	RWM	5/24/10
Barb Blackstun	Realty Specialist	Environmental Justice	BSB	05/17/10
Christina Rhyne	Rangeland Management Spec.	Invasive Non-native Species	CR	6/2/10
Hunter Seim	Rangeland Management Spec.	Sensitive Plants, T&E Plant	JHS	5/10/10
Desa Ausmus	Wildlife Biologist	T&E Animal	DA	5/18/10
Jennifer Maiolo	Mining Engineer	Water Quality - Ground	JAM	5/19/10
Gina Robison	Recreation Planner	WSA, W&S Rivers	GMR	5/10/10
Desa Ausmus	Wildlife Biologist	Animal Communities	DA	5/18/10
Desa Ausmus	Wildlife Biologist	Special Status, T&E Animal	DA	5/18/10
Christina Rhyne	Rangeland Management Spec	Plant Communities	CR	6/2/10
Hunter Seim	Rangeland Management Spec	Special Status, T&E Plant	JHS	5/10/10
Emily Spencer	Ecologist	Riparian Systems	ELS	5/6/10
Emily Spencer	Ecologist	Water Quality	ELS	5/6/10
Emily Spencer	Ecologist	Upland Soils	ELS	5/6/10

### **Land Health Assessment**

This action has been reviewed for conformance with the BLM's Public Land Health Standards adopted February 12, 1997. This action meets Public Land Health Standards. Land health assessments have been conducted in landscapes and watersheds within the Field Office Planning Area. Invasive plants including saltcedar, have been found to be a problem on many sites and once established are a threat to the herbaceous component of the plant communities.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan and that the NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of NEPA.

Signature of Lead Specialist\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of NEPA Coordinator\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Authorizing Official\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Note: The signed Conclusion on this document is part of an interim step in the BLM's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision.

**Attachment #2**  
**DOI-BLM-CO-N010-2010-0089-DNA**  
**Site Photos**



Looking upstream at  
Vermillion Falls

Tamarisk at  
Vermillion Falls

